Adapting a Social Media Strategy in the Classroom: PEET

Although social media is finding its way into classrooms in a variety of ways, the literature demonstrates that its use in nursing is lagging (Ferguson, 2013). This article describes how the Twitter™ concept of using 140 characters or fewer can be effectively implemented by nursing faculty and students while staying within the school’s learning management system. PEET is an acronym that stands for Prairie View Entertains Excellent Thoughts. This strategy draws on the learning principles and methods of instruction that promote active learning and a student-centered classroom. PEET provides faculty with an additional teaching and engagement tool that is adaptable to a variety of teaching situations. Three examples are described below.

PEET Uses

The original forum for the PEET innovation was a 1-week national conference on health disparities, attended by the university nursing students for elective credit. Three hundred students attended the conference, of which 17 junior- and senior-level nursing students registered for elective credit. The teaching objectives were to:

● Create a method of daily communication that was concise and provided a mechanism for faculty feedback.

● Allow faculty to gain insight into the student’s comprehension of topics presented.

● Help students build their observations and interest for further research toward individual final course PowerPoint® presentations.

Completion sentences or questions were posted on each day of the conference in the online text function of Moodle™. Students answered daily with a PEET statement, and the faculty member responded to each student’s comments.

Examples of the completion sentences were:

● My impression of health care disparities is….

● A health care disparity theme that I am taking home today is….

● A health care disparity topic that I am interested in… because….

● A personal experience that I have had or know of with a health care disparity is….

The final project included the student’s responses to each of the above prompts, with further elaboration supported by literature, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation.

A second use of PEET was designed as a graded assignment. The objectives were to:

● Encourage fundamentals-level students to begin internalizing the attribute of caring in nursing.

● Allow faculty to gain insight into student thinking and connect with students individually through feedback.

A fundamentals nursing class was assigned to watch a video related to caring and then use the PEET format to relate caring and nursing. A simple rubric allowed the faculty to assign a grade. For example:

● 95%: PEET consisted of 140 characters or less and was a concise and powerful statement (wow effect).

● 85%: PEET was not more than 10% to 15% over the allowed number of characters and showed insight to the concept; the thought pattern was not as strong or concise.

● 75%: More than 15% over the allowed number of characters and demonstrated a loosely connected thought pattern.

A third use of PEET was designed with the objective of stimulating and engaging discussion within the classroom. In this case (a fundamentals-level class), the question was constructed in the chat room function of the learning management system. After the faculty presented a block of content, students were asked to respond to a question. They used their smartphones, tablets, or personal computers to access the chat room and respond. Their responses were projected onto a screen in front of the class so that the answers were visible to all of the students. The students’ names were projected along with their answers on the screen. This allowed the faculty member to engage students in further explanation and discussion.

Summary

In all three uses of PEET, the overall goals of student engagement and active learning were met. Each example reflects the versatility of this teaching tool and its usefulness in gaining insight into the students’ comprehension of the material.

The primary challenge was that some students did not fully understand the 140-character concept and were writing 140 words (i.e., a paragraph) instead. Students were asked to evaluate the PEET format in each of the described settings. Their responses were positive. They liked the idea of using a social media tool in the classroom without having to use a platform in the public domain. They liked the faculty feedback and they found the in-class use an interesting way to conduct class discussion.

Other faculty who tried the strategy viewed it as a useful student–faculty engagement tool and an efficient way to gain insight into student comprehension of a concept or content. The PEET strategy successfully met the intended objectives.

Conclusion

PEET is an in-house, online version of the social media platform, Twitter. It provides an additional teaching and engagement tool that promotes active learning and is adaptable for a variety of teaching situations.

Reference


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